

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 A-01 OPR-01 SY-04 MC-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 OMB-01

EURE-00 /072 W

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P 121223Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2890

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL ANTWERP PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MASS, PINS, BE

SUBJECT: JANUARY 12 DEMONSTRATION IN BRUSSELS AGAINST F-104G  
REPLACEMENT

SUMMARY. FIRST MASS DEMONSTRATION IN BELGIUM AGAINST F-104G  
REPLACEMENT TOOK PLACE IN BRUSSELS JANUARY 12. ORGANIZERS UNITED  
AROUND THEM THAT EXPENDITURE OF 30 BILLION BF ON "ENGINES OF  
DEATH" WAS WASTE OF MONEY IN A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC HARSHIP.  
MARCH WAS ENTERELY PEACEFUL DESPITE COMPETING AND RADICAL  
ELEMENTS INVOLVED. SIGNIFICANCE OF DEMONSTRATION ON BELGIAN  
GOVERNMENT POLICY IS LIKELY TO BE NIL. END SUMMARY.

1. DEMONSTRATION, WHICH CONSISTED OF SUNDAY AFTERNOON MARCH  
THROUGH HEART OF BRUSSELS AND DISTRIBUTION OF MANY HAND  
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BILLS, AS WELL ORGANIZED BY PARTICIPANTS AND WELL PATROLLED BY

LARGE CONTINGENTS OF

POLICE AND GENDARMERIE, WHO REMAINED INCONSPICUOUS OFF MARCH ROUTE. PREPARATIONS HAD BEEN UNDERWAY FOR SOME WEEKS AND UNITED A CLAIMED 60 ORGANIZATIONS AROUND CENTRAL THEME OF: "REFUSE 30 BILLION BEF EXPENDITURE FOR NEW ENGINES OF DEATH AT A TIME WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS CALLING ON US TO CARRY THE BURDEN OF INFLATION BY SPENDING OUR MONEY WISELY AND BY SETTING ASIDE OUR SALARY DEMANDS." MANY SUB-THEMES, SOMETIME IN CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER, WERE EVIDENT, REPRESENTING INTERESTS OF PARTICIPATING GROUPS. AMONG THESE THEMES WERE OPPOSITION TO NATO AND WARSAW PACT, OPPOSITION TO CAPITALISM, SUPPORT OF FLEMISH NATIONALISM AND WOMEN'S LIB, PROTECTION OF THE ARAB CAUSE AND THE 3RD WORLD AGAINST US AND IMPERIALIST MACHINATIONS, SOLIDARITY WITH CHILEAN AND SPANISH OPPOSITIONISTS, OPPOSITION TO AN ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY (OR ANY ARMY), COMPLAINTS AGAINST INFLATION AND OPPOSITION TO A PROPOSED NEW BELGIAN MILITARY CAMP AT MARCHE EN FAMELLE OR ECOLOGICAL GROUNDS.

2. DEMONSTRATORS WHO NUMBERED BETWEEN 2500-5000 (EMBASSY ESTIMATES AT DIFFERENT POINTS ALONG ROUTE), OR 6200 (POLICE ESTIMATE OF MAXIMUM) OR 10,000 (COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER ESTIMATE) WERE ESSENTIALLY PEACEFUL AND EVEN GOOD NATURED DESPITE OPPOSING IDEOLOGICAL POINTS OF VIEW AND PRESENCE OF VIOLENCE-PRONE ANARCHIST ELEMENTS SUCH AS AMADA AND TROTSKY-ORIENTED RED GUARD. APPARENTLY ALL SAW IT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE NOT TO INSIST ON THEIR DIFFERENCES, WHICH WERE NUMEROUS, AS DEMONSTRATORS INCLUDED SOME INDIVIDUALS FROM SOCIAI CHRISTIANS (PRESENT GOVERNMENT PARTY), SOCIALISTS, COMMUNISTS, AND SOME LABOR AND CHARITABLE MOVEMENTS. A FEW REPRESENTATIVES OF NETHERLANDS' AND WEST GERMAN MOVEMENTS WERE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN PRESENT (BUT NOT OBSERVED BY EMBASSY OFFICERS).

3. DEMONSTRATORS WERE DISPROPORTIONATELY FLEMISH RATHER THAN WALLOON OR BRUXELLOIS (90 PERCENT OF CHANTS AND SLOGANS WERE IN DUTCH). THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS HAD TURNED OUT; MOST DEMONSTRATORS APPEARED TO BE IN THEIR LATE TEENS OR EARLY 20S WITH LEADERS SOMEWHAT OLDER. THERE WAS NO OBVIOUS ORGANIZED PARTICIPATION BY LABOR UNIONS OR POLITICAL PARTIES (EXCEPT COMMUNISTS). DEMONSTRATION ORGANIZERS HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROMISED CONTINUED EFFORTS AND ACTION IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE HEAVY AND EXPENSIVE PUBLICITY, EVNDENT SIGNS OF THOROUGH ORGANIZATION AND USUALLY PLEASANT WEATHER, TURNOUT WAS NOT PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE. THERE WERE NO SIGNS THAT EVEN CENTRAL THEME HAD TOUCHED RESPONSIVE CHORD OF BELGIAN PUBLIC. NOR DID ESTABLISHED POLITICAL OR LABOR MOVEMENTS FEEL IT NECESSARY TO LEND THEIR SUPPORT. US WAS NOT SINGLED OUT FOR

PARTICULAR CRITICISM ON ANY OF GROUNDS POSSIBLE. WE JUDGE AT  
THIS TIME THAT DEMONSTRATION WILL HAVE LITTLE OR NO EFFECT ON  
BELGIAN GOVERNMENT'S PLANS TO REPLACE ITS F-104GS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
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